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January 15, 2004

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Thomas L. Garthwaite, M.D.
Director and Chief Medical Officer

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Thomas L. Garthwaite", is written over the printed name and title.

SUBJECT: **DHS NURSING RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION ACTIVITIES**

This is a follow-up to my August 12, 2003 memorandum and to provide you with a status report concerning the motion approved by your Board that instructed the Department of Health Services (DHS) to establish solutions to the system-wide nursing shortage and to address the staffing and financial needs of the Department's Nurse Recruitment Office.

Concurrently, I am providing you with the seventh progress report on the DHS Tutoring and Mentoring Program with East Los Angeles College's (ELAC) School of Nursing. This report covers the time-periods April 7, 2003 through December 20, 2003.

TUITION REIMBURSEMENT/RELOCATION INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

The Department implemented a Tuition Reimbursement Program in January 2003. This program provides financial assistance to permanent Registered Nurses (RN) attending advanced degree programs at accredited colleges. Currently, we have funding for this program through Fiscal Year 2003-2004.

The Department re-established the Registered Nurse Relocation Incentive Program for Fiscal Year 2002-03. This program provides financial assistance to RNs who come to work for DHS for a minimum of one year and who, immediately prior to accepting County employment, maintained permanent legal residence at least 200 miles outside Los Angeles County. As of this date, three employees have applied for compensation.

RECRUITMENT AND EXAMINING OFFICE NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Department is currently addressing our recruitment and examination needs through its restructuring efforts. We have consolidated examining staff formerly associated with DHS Administration, Public Health, LAC+USC HealthCare Network, King/Drew Medical Center, Harbor-UCLA Medical Center, and ValleyCare Olive View-UCLA Medical Center staff.

TRAINING PROGRAMS TO UPGRADE SKILLS

Additional nursing training opportunities have been developed and implemented through the Workforce Development Program (WDP), a joint DHS - Service Employees International Union, Local 660 project. The WDP established a joint Nurse Education Project Team, with the participation of nurse managers along with staff RNs and Licensed Vocational Nurses (LVN) representing the hospital clusters.

Listed below are the major highlights covering the first quarter of Fiscal Year 2003-04 (July 1, 2003 through September 30, 2003):

- Twelve RNs, who care for monitored patients, completed a Basic Dysrhythmia (EKG) certification course that includes the anatomy and physiology of the cardiac system, electrocardiography, and recognition of dysrhythmias.
- Four RNs from LAC+USC enrolled in a four-month Hemodialysis training program at Glendale Community College. The training began in September 2003.
- Four RNs began a nine-week didactic Critical Care Nursing course at El Camino College. The courses began in September 2003.
- The Nursing Education Project Team continued assessing the over 1000 submissions to participate in nursing programs. A letter was sent to approximately 950 applicants requesting them to call for an interview to determine their readiness for present LVN and RN classes as well as the classes scheduled to start in September 2004.
- Thirty RNs attended a two-day preceptorship training session.
- Ten employees are enrolled in the LVN to RN program at ELAC. They will finish the program in September 2004.
- Thirty-seven employees, from all classifications, are enrolled in a generic RN program at El Camino Community College and will graduate in May 2005.

TUTORING & MENTORING PROGRAM – EAST LOS ANGELES COLLEGE SCHOOL OF NURSING

This report covers the time-periods April 7, 2003 through December 20, 2003 which includes; ELAC's Spring 2003 (second quarter), Summer 2003, Fall 2003 (first and second quarter) sessions.

As you know, the DHS Tutoring/Mentoring Program is designed to improve study skills and enhance the overall learning process so that ELAC nursing students may pass the State Board licensure examination to become registered nurses. The DHS Nurse Recruiters and ELAC nursing staff continue to encourage ELAC nursing student graduates to apply for the full time Staff Nurse and Clinic Nurse I positions within Los Angeles County health facilities. ELAC graduates seeking part-time employment for personal or educational reasons are encouraged to apply for Relief Nurse positions. Enrolled ELAC nursing students seeking paid patient care experiences are encouraged to explore Student Worker, Nursing and Senior Student Worker, Nursing opportunities in DHS facilities.

Tutoring and Mentoring Activities:

Clinicals: During this report period, the Program at ELAC's School of Nursing conducted 45 weekend clinical rotations at LAC+USC Medical Center. These clinical rotations continue to strengthen the students' clinical skills in small groups within the County hospital setting, and provide the students with one-on-one instructor assistance.

Mini-Lectures and Support Assistance: ELAC's faculty tutors continued to provide mini-lectures in medical, surgical, mental health, and other courses outlined in ELAC's nursing course modules. This included support assistance workshops on nursing survival skills such as assertiveness, communication, advocacy, and self-esteem building.

The mini-lectures and workshop topics included pharmacology, medication dosage calculation, neurology, physiology, cardiovascular, electrolyte imbalances, nursing process, anxiety and personality disorders. ELAC conducted 159 mini-lectures and nursing workshops with an average of seven nursing students per class.

Below are two charts showing the number of ELAC nursing students that participated in the DHS program and the pass rate of ELAC students on the NCLEX-RN exam.

DHS – ELAC ENROLLMENT	
QUARTER (Dates)	NUMBER OF STUDENTS ENROLLED IN EACH QUARTER
Spring 2003, 2 nd Quarter (04/07/03 – 06/06/03)	133
Summer 2003 (06/07/03 – 09/01/03)	n/a
Fall 2003, 1 st Quarter (09/02/03 – 10/25/03)	148
Fall 2003, 2 nd Quarter (10/26/03 – 12/20/03)	127

NCLEX-RN PASS RATES					
QUARTER	GRADUATING STUDENTS	STUDENTS PASSING NCLEX-RN	STUDENTS FAILING NCLEX-RN	HAVE NOT TAKEN NCLEX-RN	PASS RATE (%)
Spring 2003 2 nd Quarter	25	20	3	2	80%
Summer 2003	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Fall 2003, 1 st Quarter	8	*	*	*	*
Fall 2003, 2 nd Quarter	24	*	*	*	*

*Data is not available.

The ELAC pass rate has steadily increased since the inception of the Tutoring/Mentoring program in 1999 (54%).

DHS ELAC Recruitment Activities/Events:

- 04/07/03 and 09/02/03 – DHS Nurse Recruiter attended ELAC's Kick-Off programs for the new students and their senior class. The Kick-Off is conducted at the beginning of each quarter as part of the student's orientation. The DHS Nurse Recruiter encouraged ELAC students to consider the County as their future employer and introduced the availability of the DHS Tutoring/Mentoring program.
- 04/11/03 – DHS hosted a New Graduate Reception at LAC+USC Healthcare Network. ELAC students as well as other graduating student from local colleges were invited to attend. The students met with all the Nurse Recruiters to discuss job opportunities.
- 05/23/03 and 12/12/03 – DHS invited the ELAC graduating nursing students to a Breakfast and Job Fair at LAC+USC Healthcare Network. The students gained knowledge of nursing positions and met with key nursing staff members.
- 06/01/03 and 12/14/03 – DHS Nurse Recruiter attended the ELAC Nursing Graduating and Pinning ceremony. Following the graduation, questions were answered regarding various opportunities within DHS and information was shared regarding the County Job Application process.
- 10/17/03 – DHS Nurse Recruiter attended ELAC's bi-annual Advisory Board meeting.
- 11/18/03 – DHS hosted a New Graduate Reception at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center. ELAC students as well as other graduating student from local colleges were invited to attend. The students met with all the Nurse Recruiters to discuss job opportunities.

ELAC Applicants/Hires:

During this reporting period, 13 applications were received from ELAC students. Nine students were appointed to various RN and Student Worker positions. Four applications (two from the same person) are currently pending.

I will keep you updated on the progress of these initiatives. In the meantime, if you have any questions or require additional information, please let me know.

TLG:dp
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c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors
Department of Human Resources